AMENDMENT

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Applicants canceled claim 1 and replaced it with claim 31, canceled claim 3 and amended claims 2, 4, 5-8, 10, 12, 17 and 24. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to the claims do not introduce new matter because they are supported by language in the specification, *inter alia*, on page 2, lines 22-30; page 3, lines 1-4 and 6-10; page 4, lines 1-3; page 5, lines 1-2, 5-6, 10-14; page 6, lines 1-3, 9-11; page 7, lines 3-5; page 11, lines 16-19; page 20, lines 4-18; page 14, lines 8-14 and 17-19; page 15, lines 1-5; and page 15, lines 20-22.

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1. (canceled)

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 31 further comprising tinting the first base paint to form a first colored paint.

3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 31 wherein the first and second base paints have different sheen level application characteristics, the sheen level characteristics being selected from the group consisting of a flat sheen, a satin sheen, a semi-gloss sheen, and a gloss sheen.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 31 wherein the mixing system comprises an in-line mixing system ~~and mixing in accordance with the first ratio comprises continuously flowing the fluid prepaints from the inputs to the output of the mixing system in accordance with the first ratio~~.

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6. (currently amended) The method of claim 31 wherein mixing to form the first base paint comprises mixing without the addition of non-fluid components.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim claim 31 wherein mixing further comprises adding water.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim claim 31 wherein mixing comprises:
   receiving at the computer system sensor data indicating a volume of each of the plurality of
       fluid prepaints entering the mixing system; and
   sending a signal from the computer system to the mixing system to dynamically adjust a flow
       of each of the fluid prepaints based on the received sensor data.

9. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein the computer system comprises a distributed computer system comprising multiple processing servers and database computers.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 8 wherein:
   dynamically adjusting the flow comprises adjusting the flow of each prepaint to maintain at
       the first ratio the within said mixing system the prepaint ratio determined by the computer
   system prepaints entering the mixing system.

11. (original) The method of claim 10 wherein:
   the mixing system further comprises a plurality of electrically adjustable valves each
       configured to regulate a flow entering a different mixing system input; and
   sending a signal to the mixing system comprises sending signals individually controlling each
       of the plurality of valves.

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12. (currently amended) The method of claim 31 further comprising:

    receiving at the computer system a first customer order comprising a first paint quantity and a first paint type identifier; and

    determining at the computer system the first ratio based on the first paint type identifier.

13. (original) The method of claim 12 wherein mixing comprises continuously mixing under control of the computer system to form a volume of the first base paint substantially equal to the first paint quantity.

14. (original) The method of claim 12 wherein receiving the first customer order comprises receiving from a web client terminal and wherein mixing comprises mixing at a point-of-sale retail location in response to the first customer order.

15. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein the first customer order further comprises a payment identifier and the method further comprises exchanging data comprising the payment identifier with a payment processing system.

16. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein the payment identifier comprises an identifier selected from the group consisting of a consumer credit card number, a consumer debit card number, and a checking account identifier.

17. (currently amended) A ~~paint manufacturing~~ system for manufacturing a line of paint products from a limited set of prepaints, comprising:

    a set of different but mutually compatible prepaints, sufficient to form at least one paint line, which set comprises:

        (1) at least one fluid prepaint x, including at least one white opacifying pigment,

        (2) at least one fluid prepaint y, including at least one extender pigment, and

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(3) at least one fluid prepaint z, including at least one polymeric binder;

a prepaint mixing system comprising a plurality of fluid inputs, each fluid input comprising a computer-controllable fluid flow control; and

a computer system operatively coupled to each fluid flow control, the computer system comprising a memory storing software instructions to configured the computer system to:

receive user input selecting a first one of a plurality of base paint types,

determine a first ratio of fluid prepaints associated with the first base paint type, and

regulate each fluid flow control to establish in the determined ratio a flow of fluid prepaints entering the fluid mixing system;

receive user input selecting a second one of a plurality of base paint types,

determine a second ratio of fluid prepaints associated with the second base paint type, and

regulate each fluid flow control to establish in the determined ratio a flow of fluid prepaints entering the fluid mixing system.

18. (original) The system of claim 17 wherein the computer system comprises multiple separate processors interconnected by a data network.

19. (original) The system of claim 17 further comprising a database comprising data associating each of a plurality of different base paint types with a ratio of fluid prepaints.

20. (original) The system of claim 19 wherein the instructions to determine the ratio of fluid prepaints comprise instructions to query the database to retrieve the ratio.

21. (original) The system of claim 19 wherein the database comprises data selected from the group consisting of:

an algorithm comprising stored instructions executable by the computer system, and

stored associations between a plurality of base paint types and predetermined ratios of fluid prepaints.

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22. (original) The system of claim 19 wherein each fluid flow control comprises a valve operatively coupled to the computer system.

23. (original) The system of claim 22 wherein operatively coupled comprises coupled by a pneumatic controller.

24. (currently amended) A paint manufacturing system comprising:

a plurality of paint manufacturing sites each operable to produce at least one line of paint products from a set of different but mutually compatible prepaints;

wherein said set of prepaints is sufficient to form at least one paint line, and said set of prepaints comprises:

(1) at least one fluid prepaint x, including at least one white opacifying pigment,

(2) at least one fluid prepaint y, including at least one extender pigment, and

(3) at least one fluid prepaint z, including at least one polymeric binder;

and wherein each of the paint manufacturing sites comprises comprising a site control computer comprising instructions to control a paint manufacturing process; and

a coordinating computer system operatively coupled to each of the plant control computers by a network, the coordinating computer system comprising stored software instructions to configure the coordinating computer to exchange manufacturing operations data with the plurality of site control computers.

25. (original) The system of claim 24 wherein the instructions to control a paint manufacturing process comprise instructions to control a ratio of manufacturing ingredients in a paint product produced at a paint manufacturing site.

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26. (original) The system of claim 24 wherein the instructions to exchange manufacturing operations data comprise instructions to receive paint manufacturing supply data from each of the plurality of paint manufacturing sites, and the coordinating computer system further comprises instructions to automatically schedule a supply delivery based on the received supply data.

27. (original) The system of claim 24 wherein each of the plurality of paint manufacturing sites comprise a fluid mixing system configured to produce a base paint from a plurality of fluid prepaints and water.

28. (original) The system of claim 24 wherein:

the coordinating computer system is further configured to receive customer order data from client computers; and

the instructions to exchange manufacturing operations data comprise instructions to process received customer order data and route the customer order data to one of the plurality of paint manufacturing sites.

29. (original) The system of claim 28 wherein the instructions to route the customer order data comprise instructions to route based on site capacity data received at the coordinating computer system from the plurality of paint manufacturing sites.

30. (original) The system of claim 24 wherein each paint manufacturing site comprises a manufacturing site configured for small-batch point-of-sale operation.

31. (new) A method for manufacturing a line of paint products from a limited set of prepaints comprising:

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providing a set of different but mutually compatible prepaints, sufficient to form at least one

paint line, which set comprises:

    (1)   at least one fluid prepaint x, including at least one white opacifying pigment,

    (2)   at least one fluid prepaint y, including at least one extender pigment, and

    (3)   at least one fluid prepaint z, including at least one polymeric binder;

receiving each of said fluid prepaints at one of several inputs of a fluid component mixing

system;

mixing said fluid prepaints in said mixing system to prepare a first base paint,

wherein said prepaints are mixed according to a first prepaint ratio;

collecting said first base paint at an output of said mixing system;

mixing said fluid prepaints in said mixing system to prepare a second base paint;

wherein said prepaints are mixed according to a second prepaint ratio;

collecting said second base paint at an output of said mixing system;

wherein said first prepaint ratio and said second prepaint ratio are determined at a computer

system; and

wherein said first prepaint ratio is different from said second prepaint ratio.

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